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LD 1513 An Act To Establish the Maine Abandoned and Discontinued Roads Commission

February 7, 2022

Chair Baldacci, Chair Matlack, and members of the Joint Standing Committee State and Local Government, my name is Stephen Gorden and in addition to serving as chair of the board of commissioners for Cumberland County, I am writing today in my role as board president of the Maine County Commissioners Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee in support of LD 1513 **as amended**.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta and currently represents 15 of Maine's 16 counties and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

Discussion. Because an amendment to this bill from the sponsor has been publicly circulated, our comments on this bill focus on the amendment, not the original bill. Under the amendment, the Maine Abandoned and Discontinued Roads Commission would be formed to consider issues related to abandoned and discontinued roads, including any matters that have a significant negative impact on owners of property abutting the road, recreational users of the road, members of the public, municipal, county or state governments, or the physical integrity of the road and surrounding land. We understand that this proposal comes as a result of a subcommittee that met last year to determine the best path forward to deal with this issue. We appreciate the time that was taken by members of that subcommittee to come to consensus on a proposal. MCCA also appreciates that a representative of county government would be included in the Commission put forth in this amendment, and we would be glad to participate.

Maine's counties primarily have responsibilities associated with abandoned and discontinued roads in the state's Unorganized Territories. We recognize that issues regarding abandoned and discontinued roads have traditionally been difficult for the Legislature to tackle, given that the issues involve many stakeholders, multiple levels of governmental involvement, and overlapping legislative committee jurisdictions. Given these challenges, we feel that convening a permanent commission to tackle these issues would be an appropriate step forward.

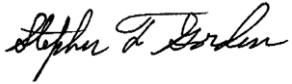
Conclusion. Thank you again, and please let us know if you have questions or need additional information,

Respectfully submitted,

Comments of MCCA re LD 1513

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen T. Gorden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Stephen Gorden
President

cc: Commissioner Brian Hobart, Chair, MCCA Legislative Committee
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel